blacknewsdigest

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The Local Angle:

REGIONAL INFORMATION OFFICES

The U.S. Department of Labor operates through 10 regional offices located in major cities across the country. If you want a local angle on a news or feature story provided through this service—or have a direct news inquiry—you may contact one of the offices listed below. This listing includes the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Assistant Regional Directors for Information and the states in their regions:

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JFK Federal Bldg.
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617-223-6767

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212-971-5477

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Georgia
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911 Walnut St.
Kansas City, Mo. 64106
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Denver, Co. 80202
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Room 2034
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Seattle, Wash. 98101
296-442-7620

BLACK YOUTHS 'EARN AND LEARN'
WITH U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON--Debbie Royster and Robin Ramona Cothran share many similar qualities.

They're black. They're intelligent and they are highly motivated high school graduates who are working with the U.S. Labor Department this summer under the Federal Junior Fellowship Program.

For both, it's their first year as "Junior Fellows." This summer the program has about 63 participants, including 17 new high school graduates.

The Washington, D.C. pilot program lets the young people earn as they learn.

To enter the program, youths must be in the upper 10 percent of their graduating class, be accepted for enrollment in college, need employment to help meet college expenses, and have an interest in pursuing a federal career.

New "Junior Fellows" earn $2.73 per hour, the wage rate for a GS-2 federal employee. They are assigned to work with professional, technical and administrative employees in fields related to their educational objectives.

Ms. Royster says, "I believe many of the problems in our society are due to poor communications between people." She will enter Boston University this fall to begin studies in the field of communications.

She describes her work experience in the Office of Information, Publications and Reports as "invaluable."

"Every day is a learning experience in the many facets of communication and particularly in how a federal agency communicates with the general public, as well as special efforts to reach blacks and other minorities," Ms. Royster says.

Ms. Cothran, who enters Howard University in the fall to begin studies in pyschology, has been assigned to the Labor Department's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity.

(MORE)

One of her duties is to serve as liaison person between the Labor Department and the youths in its Summer Aid Program.

Ms. Cothran takes her work assignments seriously and is described by her supervisors "as a 16-year-old who acts like a 35-year-old."

Both Ms. Royster and Cothran are quick to add that their work experience is challenging and rewarding, and it is a blessing in the needed income to meet college expenses.

Assistant Secretary of Labor Fred G. Clark calls the program "an investment in our future," pointing out that the federal government in dealing with tomorrow's needs will require highly qualified and dedicated young people.

This program has an unusual potential to help bring into government such talented youth, he added.

Program participants are allowed to work during the summer and other school vacation periods. Generally, they average about 680 hours per year.

They may be promoted up to the GS-4 level, based on work experience and college study completed. On graduating from college, they may then compete for entry-level federal positions.

# # #

BLACKS AMONG JOBLESS TO BE HIRED,

150 WORKERS IN VIRGINIA TO BE HIRED, TRAINED

BLACKS AMONG JOBLESS TO BE HIRED,
TRAINED AS APPRENTICE BRICKLAYERS

KANSAS CITY -- The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded $51,300 to the Kansas City Builders' Association for hiring and training 20 persons, a substantial number of whom will be blacks to become apprentice bricklayers.

Bricklayers Local 4 and 18 will cooperate in the training project under the Labor Department's Job Opportunities in the Business Sector (JOBS) program.

Neal B. Hadsell, the Labor Department's assistant regional director for manpower, said the contract provides for a 23-week training period which includes on-the-job training and needed classroom instruction.

After this the apprentices will work for area contracting and construction with a starting pay of $4.66 an hour and an increase to $5.08 after training.

The JOBS program is a joint effort of the Labor Department and the National Alliance of Businessmen to hire and train disadvantaged and unemployed persons for permanent employment. Federal funds are used to help reimburse employers for extraordinary costs in on-the-job training and intensive support services.

# # #

150 WORKERS IN VIRGINIA TO BE HIRED, TRAINED
UNDER U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT, INDUSTRY EFFORT

PHILADELPHIA -- About 150 unemployed workers in Virginia, including a substantial number of blacks, will be hired and trained for permanent employment through the Job Opportunities in the Business Sector (JOBS) program, J. Terrell Whitsitt, the U.S. Labor Department's assistant regional director for manpower said.

Contracts totalling more than $203,000 have been awarded to a consortium of two Portsmouth area employers and a firm in Mechanicsville to do the training.

the JOBS program is a joint effort of the Labor Department and the National Alliance of Businessmen to hire and train disadvantaged jobless and underemployed workers for permanent jobs.

Federal funds are used to reimburse employers for extra costs of on-the-job training and intensive supportive services.

Details of the contracts follow:

-- Richmond Foods Stores, Inc., 2000 Richfood Road, Mechanicsville, will hire and train 20 new warehousemen and 20 order clerks under an $84,066 JOBS contract. On completing the on-the-job training, based on the individual need, those hired will earn $3.48 an hour. Starting wage is $3.02 an hour.

-- Portsmouth Chamber Jobs, Inc., 524 Middle Street., Portsmouth, will hire and train 110 jobless and underemployed workers under a $118,970 JOBS contract. The contract provides for training of 60 electronic assemblers, who will earn $3.01 an hour to start and $3.10 per hour after training. Also to be trained are 12 assembler-installers, 10 boat

(MORE)

patchers, 8 mold laminators, 8 spray painters, 6 boat outfitters and and 6 deck and hull assemblers, who will earn $2.60 beginning salary and $2.75 on completing training. Length of training will vary according to particular needs of the individuals. Members of the consortium are General Electric Co., Portsmouth, and Columbia Yachts, Chesapeake.

# # #

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR BLACK VIETNAM-ERA
VETERANS LITTLE CHANGED FOR SECOND QUARTER

WASHINGTON -- The unemployment rate for black Vietnam-era veterans 20 to 34 years old did not change significantly between the first and second quarters of 1974, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

The rate was 11.8 percent for the first quarter and 10.5 percent for the second quarter.

(Unemployment rates by race are not seasonally adjusted.)

The 10.5 percent rate for black veterans was not materially different from that of black nonveterans (9.5 percent) in the same age group, but it remained more than twice the 4.3 percent rate of white veterans.

It is difficult to estimate precisely the black-white differences because unemployment data for blacks are based on very small sample numbers and are subject to large sampling errors, the Bureau said.

Nevertheless, the black-white differences for the younger group, 20 to 24 years old, have generally been greater than for the older men.

The overall job situation for Vietnam-era veterans 20 to 34 years old showed little change in the second quarter of 1974.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, 5.5 million veterans were employed, 290,000 were unemployed, and the unemployment rate at 5.0 percent was essentially the same as in the first quarter and a year ago.

The steadiness of the unemployment rate is attributable to the general stability of the national job market and the changing age composition of the veterans.

(MORE)

The number of veterans out of the service for several years has been growing, while the number of young men being discharged from the Armed Forces has been greatly reduced. Thus, a much smaller proportion of Vietnam-era veterans now are 20-24 years old, where the unemployment rate is considerably higher than for older veterans.

In the second quarter of 1974, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the younger veterans was 9.8 percent compared with 4.2 and 2.6 percent for those 25-29 and 30-34.

The jobless rate for older veterans is usually equal to or lower than that for older nonveterans, but a substantial difference still remains between the higher rate of the younger veterans compared with nonveterans 20-24 years old. Accounting for some of the difference is the fact that young nonveterans have been in the job market longer than the recently returned veterans and thus are better established in jobs. Also, unemployment insurance payments are available to Vietnam-era veterans, regardless of prior civilian work experience. This helps to soften the impact of joblessness for some veterans and may influence them to continue searching for work until they find the "right" job. On the other hand, many young nonveterans may not have enough wage credits to qualify for unemployment compensation while they look for work and may feel pressed to take any job available.

Other highlights for the second quarter of 1974 include the following (based on data that are not seasonally adjusted):

Jobless rates for veterans 20-34 years old remained lowest for those residing in the South (4.1 percent) and highest for those living in the West (6.4 percent).

(MORE)

The proportion of unemployed veterans looking for work for 15 weeks or more rose to 30 percent after having shown some improvement during the past year.

In terms of reasons for their unemployment, the proportion of veterans reporting job loss rose substantially over the year, especially for those reporting layoff.

# # #

NEW GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE
MINORITY JOB OPPORTUNITIES

WASHINGTON -- New guidelines for enforcing equal employment opportunity in federal contract work "promise more and better jobs for minority and women workers," according to the director of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC).

OFCC Director Philip J. Davis said that under the guidelines, contractors' affirmative action plans for the hiring and promotion of minorities and women "will be evaluated in more detail and more uniformly."

The guidelines are contained in OFCC's revised Order 14, which took effect May 15, 1974.

Written affirmative action plans are required of all firms having 50 or more employees before these companies may obtain federal service or supply contracts or subcontracts worth at least $50,000.

The plans must conform to requirements of OFCC-administered Executive Order 11246 which prohibits discrimination by federal contractors because of race, color, sex, religion or national origin and requires affirmative action to provide equal employment opportunity.

Revised Order 14 standardizes evaluation of equal opportunity programs by contract compliance officers in the 18 federal agencies responsible for awarding and monitoring government contracts, Davis said.

# # #

BRENNAN TO URGE VETO IF ANTI-SAFETY
RIDER KEPT ON APPROPRIATIONS MEASURE

DENVER -- In an address before the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees here, Secretary of Labor Peter J. Brennan said he would ask President Nixon to veto the Labor-HEW appropriations bill if it contains an amendment eliminating safety and health inspections at firms with fewer than 25 employees.

The amendment was in the appropriations bill as passed by the House of Representatives. Senate had not acted.

The amendment would deny 30 percent of the Nation's workers most of the protections they now receive under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. And 90 percent of the country's business firms would not be subject to inspections.

"Why should 18 million American workers be denied the protection of the federal safety and health law, simply because they work for small companies?" Brennan asked.

Brennan told the union, which represents workers who lay and maintain track and do other construction jobs on railroads, that the Administration is trying to help revive their industry and create new jobs.

A freight rate increase approved by the Interstate Commerce Commission will add $1.5 billion in interstate revenues, and a large portion must be used to upgrade tracks and buy new equipment under terms of the ICC's action, Brennan said.

President Nixon, he added, has asked Congress to provide $2 billion in federal loan guarantees for railroads under the Transportation Improvement Act.

(MORE)

OSHA AWARDS TRAINING GRANTS FOR

Brennan emphasized that jobs must be protected in rail mergers and reorganizations, including the Northeast corridor rail reorganization.

He said the Labor Department "is on record against any solution of the problem by means of a helter skelter abandonment of track which fails to take secondary economic and social factors into consideration."

# # #

OSHA AWARDS TRAINING GRANTS FOR EDUCATION IN JOB SAFETY AND HEALTH

WASHINGTON -- The Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has awarded three contracts totaling $1,040,410 for training and education in job safety and health.

The contracts are with the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Washington, D.C., $900,000; Behavior Science Corp., McLean, Va., $106,595; and Pennsylvania State University, $33,815.

Over a 15-month period the American Association of Community Colleges will offer employers and employees short-term training in job safety and health matters through the community and junior college system, thereby demonstrating the feasibility of using the college network for training purposes in this field.

Behavior Science Corp., will develop and test a system for determining minimum acceptable levels of safety and health knowledge and skill required for satisfactory performance by construction supervisors. Under the terms of the 12-month contract, the corporation will identify organizations with the capability to administer a certification program once it has been developed and validated.

Penn State will develop, implement and evaluate a 20-hour course on voluntary compliance with federal occupational safety and health regulations. The 12-month program is intended to demonstrate the feasibility of using a state university extension system to train employers and employees in job safety and health.

# # #

BLACK LUNG MEDICAL BENEFITS
EXPLAINED IN NEW PUBLICATION

WASHINGTON -- A new leaflet, "Black Lung: Medical Treatment Benefits," details medical benefits for Department of Labor black lung beneficiaries.

The publication lists types of medical treatment available through the Labor Department or responsible coal mine operators for black lung beneficiaries who filed with and have been awarded benefits by the Department.

Medical treatments explained in the booklet include: medication; hospital, surgical and emergency room care; oxygen therapy; physical examinations; and transportation costs to and from treatment facilities.

The Department's black lung medical treatment benefits program went into effect Jan. 1, 1974. It is administered by the Office of Workers' Compensation, of the Department's Employment Standards Administration (ESA).

Medical benefits under the program may be paid from Jan 1, 1974, for miners who filed claims on or before that date.

For miners who filed after Jan. 1, 1974, medical benefits may be paid from the date of filing.

Copies of the leaflet and further information about the program are available from: Black Lung, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Washington, D.C. 20210.

# # #

FIGHT AGAINST WORKPLACE HAZARDS
CALLED 'BATTLE AGAINST COMMON ENEMY'

WASHINGTON -- The federal effort to reduce or eliminate workplace hazards was described as a "battle against a common enemy" by a top U.S. Labor Department official.

In an address before the Associated General Contractors here John H. Stender, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health, said the federal government, industry and labor are "engaged together in a war" that can be won only by an alliance of the three.

"Over the years, we have heard much about the power of business, the power of labor and the power of government. Surely these three powerful forces, working together, can change the things that cry out so loudly for change," Stender said.

He called on all, whether company presidents or factory workers, to think of safety--their own and the safety of others--and to learn to identify hazards and quickly take corrective action.

"And only then will success come...in our common battle," declared Stender, head of the Labor Department's Occuptional Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

# # #

WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX--JUNE 1974

WASHINGTON -- The Wholesale Price Index for All Commodities rose 0.5 percent from May to June before seasonal adjustment, it was announced by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Substantial and widespread price increases for industrial commodities outweighed sharp declines for farm products and processed foods and feeds.

The index for industrial commodities rose 2.1 percent, with metals, fuels, chemicals, and machinery and equipment accounting for about 80 percent of the rise.

The index for farm products and processed foods and feeds dropped 3.4 percent.

On a stage of processing basis, consumer finished goods, a selection of food and nonfood commodities similar to those in the commodity component of the Consumer Price Index, declined 0.4 percent. Producer finished goods rose 2.1 percent.

Of the 15 major commodity groups measured by the Wholesale Price Index, 11 moved up from May to June and four were lower.

In June, the All Commodities WPI was 155.7 (1967=100), 14.5 percent above a year earlier; the industrial commodities index was 21.9 percent higher than in June 1973, while the index for farm products and processed foods and feeds was down 1.2 percent over the same period.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the All Commodities Wholesale Price Index increased 0.5 percent in June, the smallest increase since October 1973.

(MORE)

The industrial commodites index continued to rise sharply--2.2 percent. This compares with rises ranging from 2.7 to 2.9 percent the 3 preceding months.

The index for farm products and processed foods and feeds declined 4.0 percent, the fourth consecutive monthly decrease. This decline compares with decreases ranging from 2.2 to 2.4 percent the 3 preceding months. Farm products declined 8.1 percent, and processed foods and feeds decreased 1.1 percent.

Consumer finished goods declined 0.5 percent in June, the first decline since September 1973. However, consumer finished goods excluding foods continued to rise. Producer finished goods rose 2.1 percent.

Prices of metals continued to advance sharply in June--3.1 percent. Over half the rise in the metals index was due to higher prices for iron and steel.

The fuels index rose 3.0 percent, reflecting increases for gasoline, distillates, electric power, coal and coke. Prices of residual fuels declined. The chemicals and allied products index increased 4.2 percent in June.

The increase of 2.3 percent in machinery and equipment prices was only slightly less than the record figure for May.

Among other types of industrial products, prices were higher for cotton and manmade fiber textile products, apparel, and textile house-furnishings. Motor vehicles, motor vehicle parts, and railroad equipment were up in price. Increases were registered for commercial and household furniture, floor coverings, appliances, television receivers, lawnmowers, and flatware.

(MORE)

Among nonmetallic mineral products, prices were raised for concrete products, flat glass, concrete ingredients, gypsum products, structural clay products, insulation materials, and bituminous paving materials. In the pulp and paper group, converted paper and paperboard products, paper, woodpulp, and paperboard accounted for most of the rise. Wastepaper prices were lower. All types of plastic products were higher, and miscellaneous rubber products, tires and tubes, and crude rubber rose in price.

Lumber and wood products declined 2.9 percent, the second consecutive monthly decline.

Lower prices for hides and skins and leather outweighed moderate increases for footwear and other leather and related products.

Both indexes for agriculture-related commodities (farm products and processed foods and feeds) declined in June for the fourth consecutive month. The farm products index moved down 6.7 percent, principally because of lower average prices for livestock, fresh and dried vegetables, fluid milk, live poultry, and oilseeds.

The only major type of farm product to increase was grain.

Prices decreased 0.9 percent for processed foods and feeds with most of the decline due to lower prices for meats, poultry, fish, and dairy products. Prices also declined for manufactured animal feeds, fats and oils and cereal and bakery products.

# # #

World of Work

Overseas Servicemen Get Job Counseling

By PETER J. BRENNAN
Secretary of Labor

QUESTION: My son is now in the Army and stationed in Europe. He is scheduled to return to this country for discharge in about six months. I keep reading about the problems that servicemen have in finding jobs. Is there anything he can start doing now that might help him get a job when he does come home?

ANSWER: There certainly is. The Department of Labor sponsors an Overseas Veterans Counseling Program (OVCP) with trained employment counseling representatives assigned to all areas where American servicemen are stationed overseas. These counselors can advise and assist your son and other military personnel in preparing for entry into the civilian world of work. During 1973, OVCP counselors briefed 82,506 overseas servicemen on employment and training opportunity, and provided in-depth counseling to 24,580 of them.

* * * *

QUESTION: I have a small company which manufactures a number of specialty items. Some of the products require specialized work knowledge and abilities to make. I know there are some foreign workers available whom I would like to hire. I have heard that the Department of Labor must approve any foreign worker coming to the United States. Where can I find out more about making arrangements for hiring such people.

ANSWER: The Immigration and Nationalities Act requires that the Secretary of Labor certify that any immigrant coming to the United States for employment purposes will not deprive permanent residents of job opportunities or adversely affect work standards in this country. For information concerning such certification you should get in touch with the local office of your state employment service. They will furnish you with necessary application forms and other information.

* * * *

Editor's note: If you have a question regarding job training and placement, labor-management relations, job health and safety, equal employment opportunity, wages and hours, employment and unemployment, prices and earnings and other matters involving the U.S. Department of Labor, send it to:

Peter J. Brennan
Secretary of Labor
"World of Work"
U.S. Department of Labor
Washington, D.C. 20210

Green Light for Summer Driving

By Virginia Knauer
Special Assistant to the President
and Director
Office of Consumer Affairs
Department of Health, Education and Welfare

If you are making vacation plans—as I recently did—you are probably wondering whether you can confidently plan on using the car.

The answer is a qualified yes. If consumers continue to practice energy conservation, there should be enough gasoline for a certain amount of summer vacation travel as well as for regular transportation needs.

According to the Federal Energy Administration (FEA)—known as Federal Energy Office earlier this year—if consumers continue to observe the 55 m.p.h. speed limit, use car pools and keep their cars in good driving condition, we should make it through the summer without gas shortages.

This does not mean that our gas supply would hold up if every family took off on a coast-to-coast trip. But it should reassure you that you need not worry if you are planning a short touring vacation or a drive to the shore or the mountains.

This forecast is seconded by the American Automobile Association (AAA), which conducts spot checks of service stations around the country. For this summer, the AAA reports that motorists should be finding it easier to get gas. More and more stations are pumping on Sundays, Saturday nights and weekday evenings. Most service stations on major highways are now open seven days a week with many also operating 24 hours a day. Most states have done away with odd-even rationing plans. And only few stations are now limiting purchases.

But it is still important for consumers to practice energy conservation. As FEA explains it, the importance of gasoline savings lies in the multipication factor. There are about 100 million registered cars in the 50 states. If every driver were to reduce fuel consumption by only 15 percent, we could save over 28 million gallons of gas a day. That would be a saving of over 680,000 barrels of gas every day!

Here are FEA's suggestions for reducing your fuel consumption this summer:

- Drive at moderate speeds. Most automobiles get about 28 percent more miles per gallon on the highway at 50 m.p.h. than they do at 70 and about 21 percent more mpg at 55 than at 70 m.p.h.
- Find ways to drive less. Join car pools, walk and bike more.
- Keep your car in prime condition to get better mileage. Have your car tuned twice a year, check tire pressure regularly and remove unnecessary weight from car.

For more information on how to conserve energy this summer, you may want to contact the Federal Energy Administration Public Inquiry Section, Washington, D.C. 20460.

For news of your local gasoline situation, watch this newspaper. For specific information on gasoline supplies in other areas, you might contact the state police or the turnpike or highway authority in those areas.

FILLERS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

The merger of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations brought unions with about 16 million workers into one organization, according to Important Events in American Labor History, a publication of the U.S. Department of Labor.

* * *

Federal employee unions were granted the right to bargain collectively with government agencies under an executive order signed by President Kennedy in 1962, according to Important Events in American Labor History, a publication of the U.S. Department of Labor.

* * *

The 50th anniversary of the U.S. Department of Labor was celebrated March 4, 1963.

* * *

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin in hiring, apprenticeship, compensation, and terms, conditions or privileges of employment and in union membership.

* * *

The Hosiery Workers Union, whose membership had declined to 5,000, was absorbed by Textile Workers Union of America in 1965, according to Important Events in American Labor History, a publication of the U.S. Labor Department.

* * *